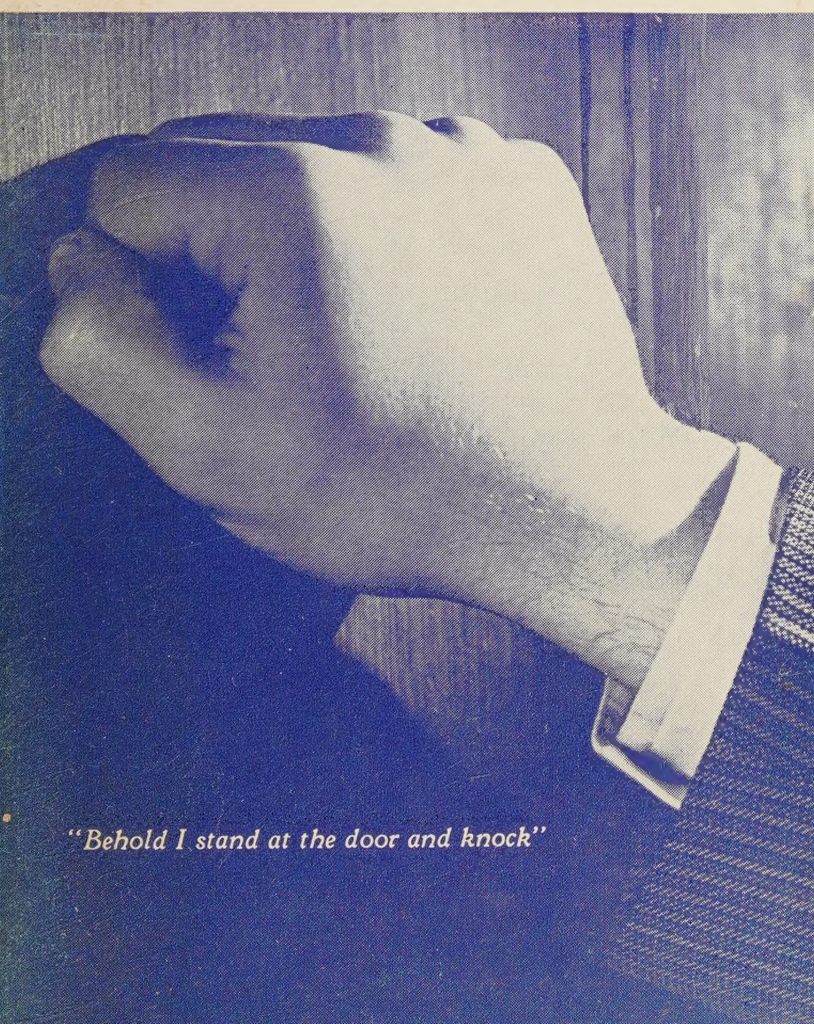
LAY WORKER'S MANUAL
FOR
VISITATION EVANGELISM



"Behold I stand at the door and knock"

"Behold I stand at the door and knock"

Cover photograph by Philip D. Gendreau

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LAY WORKER'S MANUAL

–for–

VISITATION EVANGELISM

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SIMPLE STEPS

IN

EVANGELISTIC VISITING

OR

CONVERSATIONAL EVANGELISM

•

Prepared and Issued by

THE BOARD OF EVANGELISM

THE EVANGELICAL UNITED BRETHREN CHURCH

1910 U. B. Building Dayton 2, Ohio

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Introduction

Greatest Challenge

The greatest challenge in the world is that of introducing boys and girls, young people, women and men to Christ Jesus our Savior and Lord, and enlisting them in His cause. In the acceptance of Christ as Savior from sin and Lord of life, individuals and groups are transformed. To enlist men in loyalty to His Church is to make enduring Christ's relationship to them and their relationship to Him, and to make sure that His redemptive work will be carried on in our needy world.

Christ's Methods Important

Every time we read the Gospels, we are more deeply impressed with the person and work of Christ. His high hopes grip us. His methods of achieving His purposes impress us with the fact that if His purposes are to become our purposes, we must use His methods to achieve them.

He taught men concerning God and His message to men, and He lived as the incarnation of God's will and redemptive purpose. He preached with spiritual authority. He taught with the most effective stories, which He used as parables of practical, yet profound truth. He spent much of His time in personal interviews, meeting the deepest needs of each of these individuals. There is as much space in the Gospels given to His conversations with individuals as to all of His sermons and parables. We must not leave out of our church's ministry any of the effective evangelistic methods which He so fruitfully used.

We must not limit ourselves to the use of only one method of evangelism to the exclusion of all others. All too long have we used too limited means of evangelism. Too many of us have used but one method. We should make greater use of every workable Christian method.

Balanced Evangelistic Emphases

We must be concerned that our emphases should be balanced, more nearly as the emphases of Jesus were balanced. Here on the North American continent, where for generations the Church has been sowing the gospel truth, it should be expected that under gospel preaching some of this seed will come to harvest. The day of "mass" evangelism is not past. We may be just at the beginning of a new day of preaching evangelism. There will always be a definite place for the public call to discipleship. Night-after-night preaching has great value, both in bringing the challenge of Christ to the lost, and in making a contribution to the spiritual enrichment and deepened loyalty of the followers of Christ. We must not underestimate the value of preaching evangelism.

Nor is the value of the day by day testimony of Christian-spirit-filled lives, and the moral influence of the Church in the community to be underestimated. And certainly it is not to be assumed that teaching is unnecessary in the work of evangelism. In fact, many a teacher in our church school *is* successful, in the way John the baptizer was, in introducing his pupils to Christ. Our Christian education program must continue to prepare the way for Christian commitment, and follow it up with Christian training for growth.

Recover Conversational Evangelism

But we must come once again to lay greater stress upon dealing personally with individuals as Jesus did. We must learn His techniques of personal interviewing. The early church learned and followed His methods faithfully. For the early Christians, evangelism was their primary concern, and individual witnessing was their primary evangelistic method, practiced in season and out of season, the year round. For them, the Gospel was good news, not good advice; and they told that good news to anyone who would listen. For them, every man and woman

without their Savior was lost and was a challenge and an opportunity for evangelism. Their world needed changing, but they were wise enough to know that world order is established not from without by revolution, but from within through redemption. Only changed men change the world. Only righteous men usher in a world "wherein dwelleth righteousness." And righteousness which "exalteth a nation" is born in individuals, saved from their sins and nurtured in Christian living.

We must recover this conversational evangelism which has too largely become a lost art in the Christian Church. We must develop it, so that evangelistic conversation is once again the normal activity of large numbers of individual Christians. More and more of the evangelistic activity of the Church in the days immediately ahead, will be carried on outside the four walls of the church building; and the individual approach to individuals must have an increasingly larger place in all our churches' total ministry and program. This Manual is provided for guidance in that program.

Warning!

But let no one think that any plan, however ingenius, will achieve spiritual and lasting results unless it be applied in the same spirit that motivated Jesus. We must approach this work of evangelism with much prayer. It must be underlined with spiritual concern. It must be directed and empowered by God's Holy Spirit. And it must be followed up with continuing love, Christian fellowship, training and guidance for the newly adopted children of God. All of this was comprehended in Jesus' plan of evangelization, and anything less will not succeed in getting permanent spiritual results. The power of the Spirit does not make organized effort unnecessary; nor does organized effort make the enduement of the Spirit unnecessary. We must have both!

The Four-fold Plan

The Visitation Evangelism program of our denomination, as our Board of Evangelism promotes it, involves four distinct phases or parts. First, there is a *Preparation Period,* involving all that goes into making possible an effective evangelistic fruitage. Second, there is a *Training Period,* when the best laymen of the church, who have been enlisted as friendly visitors, are given specific instructions and help. Then there is a week of intensive *Evangelistic Visiting.* This visiting period may be on identical days or nights with the training period. In fact, this is perhaps the ideal. The fourth phase is the *Continuation Program* of follow-up, further cultivation, training for membership and the assimilation of new members into the program and work of the Church. It involves also the carrying on of this individual visiting once each week or month the year round by laymen.

The Training

A further word should be said about the kind of training to be given.

Our first emphasis is upon the spiritual preparation because it is most important. The techniques of friendly conversation about spiritual matters will then need to be taken up, because they are basic to all conversational or visitation evangelism. They will be used in visits intended to get a renewal of Christian loyalty to God and His Church as well as those directed to securing church membership transfers or new converts.

A large section of the training concerns the method of reclaiming indifferent members. (Especially Item 9 and its sub-points.)

Too, a very definite emphasis is laid upon conserving the church loyalty of the moving multitudes, by securing the transfer of their church membership. (See especially

Items 1 to 8.) This program will likely involve giving some transfers, as well as receiving them. But, if we are more concerned about people and their spiritual welfare than about the record of our individual church, we will help them to become established in active fellowship with the Church, regardless of who gets the statistical credit. If all of us help establish these "moving members" in the communities in which they live, we will all benefit, and better yet, the Kingdom cause will be advanced.

The largest part of the training for evangelistic visiting (Items 10 to 28) concerns itself with securing a first and definite commitment of an individual in his family to Christ Jesus as Savior and Lord. This involves "conviction" of sin, or dissatisfaction with his past living, as well as "repentance" or a willingness to turn from it to the Savior. These attitudes open the door for God to come in and help; and salvation and newness of life are His gift to such a repentant one. We can depend upon His promise at this point. It is His Spirit Who makes us conscious of our new relationship, as we have faith in His Word.

Because this is such important work such a large place is given to training for it. This is the heart of evangelistic visiting—bringing individuals to commitment to Christ, that His salvation may be their free gift. In this we are training laymen, who feel they are infinitesimal, "atomic" creatures, to start a chain of events which releases the Power of God in such force as to redeem individuals and families. And when they become a part of the chain of God's redemption, the spiritual impact transforms them, too. No workers ever come out of this kind of work without having their own spiritual lives deepened. And no church can have come through a successful evangelistic visitation effort without being challenged to revitalize its whole life for the sake of the new converts.

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Simple Steps for Workers or Visitors

1. Each worker should study these simple steps carefully. Read these instructions again and again.

2. Each team should have a flashlight to find house numbers and names on mailboxes, and make last minute check on information on the assignment card.

3. Each visitor should pray as he goes calling, that God's Spirit may precede him and open the way. Pray as you approach the house and ring the doorbell, that God may use you to help this prospect to find salvation.

4. When the door is opened, be prepared with a friendly greeting and a brief statement of your name and mission.

4.1 "We are (name) and (name) from The Evangelical United Brethren Church. Our Church is having a friendly visitation this week, and we have come to call on you to talk about Christ and the Church."

4.2 If they do not immediately invite you, ask: "May we come in and visit a little while?"

4.3 Be natural in your approach.

4.4 Inside, get seated near your prospect.

4.5 If your only prospect in this home is a man, you may find it better to speak to him alone in another room. If he is in the basement, or the garage, by all means ask for the privilege of visiting with him where he is. (This does not hold if other members of the family need Christ. In such a case use the principles of family visiting, Item 16.)

4.6 If visitors are present, or some other element in the home is unnatural or unfavorable, you may find it better to leave and return at some later date.

4.7 Occasionally you may get a cool reception. If the prospect is in an unpleasant mood or outspokenly stubborn, leave, but with a pleasant word, a broad smile, a firm handclasp, and an invitation to Church —and a hope that you may see him again.

4.8 It is well to remember that there is more to visitation evangelism than getting commitments. We are sowing seed. We are fanning dying fires. We are promoting our Church. We are speaking a good word for our pastor. We are opening doors for later visits. We are developing our own Christian resources. Our calls are never in vain.

5. A few minutes may be spent in a friendly way in chatting about things of common interest and pleasure. Children, toys, house plants, antique furniture, hobbies, handiwork, etc., are excellent and interesting places to start conversation, depending on the circumstances. But, be careful to come quickly to your chief mission.

6. Inform your prospect of the visitation of all the friends of the Church, and the hope that on Membership Sunday, many of them, having committed their lives to Christ, will come into fellowship and membership in the Church.

6.1 "The real purpose of our visit today was to invite you to bring your membership to our Church if you are members elsewhere; if not, to accept Christ as your Savior and Lord, and unite with the Church."

6.2 Be prayerful and sincere. Sham or pretence is always easily detected. Be free to admit before he tells you that Christians are weak and faulty at best, but assure him you have a great Christ and are striving honestly to be worthy of Him.

6.3 Carry on only one conversation.

6.4 Let one visitor talk at a time. The other caller should listen attentively and help out when a brief word is needed.

6.5 He may especially help the prospect to stay on the subject of the visit.

7. Then learn your prospect's attitude, and religious background, by *asking questions* and *getting him to talk* about past experiences with Christ and the Church. Questioning helps the prospect focus his problem and act upon his own conclusions. Information checked on the prospect assignment card will help give you a cue, but let your prospect talk and by all means listen sympathetically. Ask such questions as these:

7.1 "I understand that you send your children to our Sunday School. We are glad you encourage them that way. Of what church are you a member?"

7.2 "You have belonged to church at one time or another?"

7.3 "We have been glad for the interest you have shown in the Church. Where did you attend Sunday school and church in your childhood?"

7.4 "Your parents must have been good, and active Christians."

7.5 Even if there were little Christian background revealed by the above questions, one could still assume:

7.51 "You believe in God, and know that Christ reveals God best? You accept the teachings of Jesus, don't you?"

7.52 "You want to make the best and most of your life, and you know that Christ has helped more millions to do that than anyone else?"

7.6 Always assume the best possible about your prospect. He will acknowledge his sin and need for turning to Christ more readily this way, and without

the risk of offending him as you would if you charged him with sin and the need for repentance. Let him do his own confessing. This confession is what you really desire, that God may be able to meet his confessed need.

7.7 Don't start with your personal testimony. Until you have asked, and he has told you what kind of background he has, you do not know what part of your experience will be helpful to him. When he has revealed his special problem you may have just the word he needs.

7.8 Avoid asking questions to which he may respond with a "No" indicating he is not interested. Few people, after they have asserted themselves, like to change their minds, even if they discover they were wrong and spoke hastily. It is hard to get a negative reply reversed, especially in the presence of strangers.

8. If he is already a member of the church, at some other place, there are many good reasons why a Christian should bring his church membership to our Church. Share some of them even *before* excuses are raised.

8.1 The home church, and every other church, would go out of business if no one transferred his church membership to it.

8.2 There is no growth without service, and little service is rendered where we do not belong.

8.3 We can make the Church a greater force, if all believers in Christ will unite with the Church.

8.4 "Even if you don't know how long you'll stay here, few of us do; and we can't wait to find out, or we'd never join the Church. A letter from our Church when you next move will be a better recommendation than one from the old church from which you will then be twice removed. A letter is easier to move than a trunk. If you move away only six

months from now, the minister will be glad to forward your certificate to a church in your new community."

8.5 "You know that an uprooted plant will wither unless it strikes root in a new place promptly."

8.6 "You must not bury your talent. Your training and experience are part of your talent from the Lord. You must not lose it by lack of use."

8.7 "If you have overworked in the home church, do not let the pendelum swing too far in the other direction, now."

8.8 "Even if you are unable to contribute as much as you would like, your best contribution is your presence, your witness, and your service. And where your heart is there your treasure will be also."

8.9 "This is a real opportunity for you to rededicate your life to Christ and renew your loyalty to the Church."

9. Sometimes the whole problem of church loyalty is thrust upon you, because you find you are dealing with a church member (possibly even of your own church) who is not active and who needs to renew his dedication and loyalty to Christ and the Church. Your approach will depend upon his reasons for inactivity or lack of loyalty.

9.1 When you come upon a church member who admits he has not been very loyal to the church, remind him kindly:

9.11 "But you need the church, its fellowship, its worship, its inspiration, its training and guidance."

9.12 "You are the kind of person who keeps his promises and I'm sure you want to keep one you made when you joined the church and pledged your loyalty."

9.13 "Your example and influence are so important to your family and to your neighbors

and to the church that you will want it constantly to be the best."

9.14 "Loyal Christians are our best talking points as we go out to win sinners to Christ. It is always difficult to win others to Christ if our own members are not faithful. Your witness of silent loyalty helps us carry on our whole program of evangelism better."

9.15 "You have many great contributions you can make to the Church. Your presence is a constant encouragement to our pastor and leaders. Your influence is most important in aiding the church work in this community. Your gifts of money when added to those of others mean more than you know. You help to make a strong church."

9.16 "Through the church you contribute to the Christianization of the whole world. What you could not do alone you can help to do when you loyally work through the church."

9.17 "When the world is at its worst the church should seek to be at her best. That's why she needs your loyalty."

9.2 If church loyalty conflicts with his Sunday habits he likely needs to change his habits.

9.21 If he says he's "just gotten out of the habit of going to church," perhaps there is a deeper reason which will appear later. But you can say, "We are not helpless before any of our habits. Other habits can be formed if we really desire to form them, can they not?"

9.22 To the one who just sleeps too long: "But you set your alarm to insure getting to work. When I recognized that my attendance at church was as important as my work, that feeding the

spiritual life was as important as feeding the physical body, I decided to set our alarm and get up for church."

9.23 "Even if you say it's your only time to rest, there are more ways to rest than sleeping. I've found real rest in worship and fellowship and doing something entirely different from my work."

9.24 Others pleading they have only this time to do some necessary work at home should be led to see that it is not just a law in the Bible, but written also in our bodies, that we should have a rest day each week, or we suffer.

9.25 When they admit it just takes too much effort—"Some of the real joy of attending church or doing anything worthwhile lies in what it costs us. The extra effort to get up earlier, to get dressed up, to get the family ready are part of the cost of going to church. Usually we enjoy most the things that cost us most in time, energy and money. You enjoy church more when you put real effort into getting there."

9.3 When confronted with the excuse that his work keeps him away from church, ask

9.31 "What kind of work do you do?"

9.32 "Is there no way of rearranging it so you can be off at least for an hour of church worship on Sunday morning?"

9.33 "Or how about the evening service? Some of us have sometimes felt that the Sunday evening service has come to the Kingdom for such a time as this."

9.34 We have our week-night meetings too. Name those he should belong to, and tell of their program to meet his needs.

9.35 "Few of us can remain Christian long without the close fellowship of others with similar purposes."

9.36 "We need group worship so much, for its reinforcement of our faith."

9.4 When one protests that his family goes to church:

9.41 "No one else can carry our responsibility for loyalty."

9.42 "We do so few things together nowadays that we need the experience of worshipping as a family, together."

9.43 "Our family needs our reinforcement of their holy purposes."

9.44 "We have too few opportunities to show *our* loyalty to the best we know, to witness to our faith in God and love and our fellowmen, to let others know we are one with them in search for the highest truth and the best way of putting it into living practice, that we need to take advantage of this one."

9.5 "I can worship just as well out in nature."

9.51 "You can, and I can, but do we, without the reminder of others round about us?"

9.52 "Part of the value of our corporate worship is our witness to others of our faith."

9.6 When someone protests that he can't dress well enough to attend our church:

9.61 "There is something wrong with our church if clothes would make a difference."

9.62 "Any clothes that are good enough to wear to town or to work are good enough for you to wear to church. After all, the rest of us aren't 'fashion plates' ourselves."

9.63 "Clean clothes are respectable no matter what they cost. I'm sure your clothes are good enough."

9.7 When some real or imaginary insult has embittered him; let him tell you more about it.

9.71 If he is willing to forgive, the whole matter can be adjusted. In the Bible there is a story of one forgiven who was not forgiving of others. Sometimes we are that way when God forgives us much, we will not forgive others even a little thing.

9.72 If he is willing to discuss the whole matter with the pastor, or in the presence of the person concerned, tell him you will ask the pastor to call.

9.8 If he is one who confesses that it is his dislike for the preacher that keeps him away:

9.81 "But your loyalty is to Christ and His Church."

9.82 Tell him of the many who have learned to appreciate the minister very much.

9.83 Tell some of the minister's fine qualities for which you are appreciative and grateful.

9.84 "Preachers come and preachers go but the church must go on forever. We need your loyalty to the church regardless of your like or dislike of the minister."

9.9 "Life is like a ladder; every step we take is either up or down. You want to step up, don't you?"

10. To all except church letter transfer prospects talk Christ and the Christian home before church membership. When Christ is welcomed into the heart, often there is no church membership problem; and church membership without Christ we do not want.

"There is every good reason why you should be a Christian. Have you thought of these?"

10.1 "God loves you and me, and is concerned for our welfare and that of our world, in spite of our lack of concern."

10.2 "We need forgiveness. We have all done wrong. Our God is gracious and ready to forgive any who are penitent, is He not?" (1 John 1: 9.)

10.3 "We all need spiritual help, do we not?"

10.4 "You owe it to God, to yourself, and to your family, to be a Christian, don't you?"

10.5 "Every child should have a Christian home, we believe; don't you?"

10.6 "We want our lives to count, and our influence to be of real worth."

10.7 "The world at its worst needs all of us at our best."

10.8 "We have no real argument against it. Our conscience says we should be Christians; doesn't it?"

10.9 "Since you know you ought to be a Christian and a faithful church member I am sure you will make that decision tonight."

11. Do not argue. You lose your friend while you win your argument.

11.1 Put the best meaning on everything your prospect says and does, and thus keep the interview on a high level.

11.2 You cannot decide all moral problems for your friend. Christ will help him take care of them, when He is received into his life; and after all, no Christian is asked to give up anything that is good for him—spiritually, morally, or physically.

11.3 You need not defend all practices of Christians, or even members of your own church. Say, "I am

not asking you to join the church and be like some one else. I invite you to accept Christ as your Lord and Savior and live like Him."

11.4 Some Christians seem to be able, with a clear conscience, to do what we can not do. Each must abide by his leading from God and his study of God's Word, when it comes to moral issues. Anyway, we are not saved by being good. The rich young ruler was good, but Jesus said he lacked something.

11.5 If he would lead you off on some argument you may say, "What you say is interesting, (or, what you say may be right)."

11.6 Be sympathetic. We know that it is not easy to break away from old habits, and form new ones.

11.7 You cannot answer all theological questions. Anyway, it is not your task to get someone to agree with your theology.

11.8 Speak only in a conversational tone. Do not raise your voice or become angry, no matter what is said.

11.9 We are not sent to argue, or preach a sermon, but to witness to the value of Christ and the Church in our own lives. (The exact form of that witness will be determined when we know somewhat about the prospect's needs.)

12. Do not be frightened by excuses. Listen attentively and sympathetically. Often it is better not even to "answer" excuses, especially those that may lead to argument. Allow a full and frank statement by the "prospect" of his "gripes," his questions and his needs. Agree with him whenever you can, and allow him to go on with his self-analysis and comments and reactions concerning the church and religion.

12.1 When one pleads he is not good enough, agree with him. "Of course we are not good enough! You! I! All of Us!" Later you may be able without offense to say, "However, because of that, Christ invites us to come. 'I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance,' He said."

12.2 Or, if he claims to be just as good as lots of Christians, admit it. "I am sure you are."

12.3 Hypocrites in the Church? Admit it. Judas in Jesus' disciple group, too, was a "hypocrite." But we treat them just as Jesus did Judas. We go on doing our work, and soon they eliminate themselves.

12.4 When your friend suggests he may not be able to hold out; "I'm glad you are counting the cost. Otherwise, a decision and pledge on your part might not be kept. The very fact you are concerned about keeping your promise is the best sign that you will not fail."

13. Do not urge a decision until you are convinced your friend is ready to make a Christian commitment.

13.1 "Since you know you ought to be a Christian I am sure you will make that decision tonight."

13.2 "You say you want a way to take hold of this old world and serve: here is your chance. Because Christianity is Christ-centered it is service-centered. You want to be used to make a better world, don't you?"

13.3 "The heritage of Christian faith passed down to us through our country's leaders, our parents, and other Christians, must be passed on undimmed. You will do your part, won't you?"

13.4 "I agree with you that you cannot know everything about the Christian life today, but you know

enough to commit your life to Him, and to a further study of discipleship. Would you like to be a Christian if you understood the way? Are you willing to join a class in preparation for that step? and then follow it up with further study of the Christian life?"

14. When your prospect would like to put you off with "I will think it over," help him by suggesting:

14.1 "We are glad you are taking it seriously. This is a big decision. Let us help you think it through."

14.2 "I know just how you feel. I was in that same place. It is so easy to postpone; but nothing is ever settled by putting it off."

14.3 "A question is only settled when it's settled right. Only then can you claim real joy and victory. Settle it now. 'Today is the day of salvation.' "

14.4 "One cannot escape a decision; because not to decide is to decide not to accept Christ. I know you are not going to do that."

15. If timidity is the particular problem,

15.1 "There are many in our community who have similarly put off Christ a long time. That is why we are conducting this special Visitation."

15.2 "You will not be conspicuous. Other adults will be accepting Christ this week, and joining the Church together on Membership Day."

15.3 "We need not be nearly so much concerned about what our friends think as what God thinks. That is the important thing, is it not?"

16. Family visiting is most successful and guarantees more permanent results. Christianity must more consistently enlist the family groups.

16.1 Ask, "Are there other members of your family at home who are not members of the church? We would be glad to have you invite them in as we discuss this matter." Thus you may get all mem-

bers of the family, who are at home, together before continuing the visit.

16.2 Visit with the whole group to find its background.

16.3 Secure the commitment of the one who seems most ready to make a Christian commitment.

16.4 Win a child in the presence of his parents. The parents are softened by the child's sincere response to the Christian Gospel.

16.5 Get the parents' consent to the child's decision. "Our only risk in getting a child's decision is its parents. No risk at all is involved if parents will nourish the child's faith."

16.6 "A child needs Christian parents to help it succeed as a Christian, doesn't he?"

16.7 "Our Church cannot do its best for our children without the co-operation of the home." Children won and left in godless homes mostly fail as Christians.

16.8 "In the future you will be happier if your children grow and develop into fine Christian characters and noble citizens. That doesn't just happen. Parents have to do their part. But what they do will pay large dividends."

16.9 "What *you* are and what *you* say is more important to your child than what *we* do and say at the Church. We must have your help if your child is to succeed as a Christian."

17. Young couples with small children should by all means be won to Christ and the Church.

17.1 "Life attitudes are established very young."

17.2 "Before they know why, children are Republican or Democrat, Evangelical United Brethren or Presbyterian, interested in Christ and the Church or indifferent, according to the life of their parents."

17.3 "I'm sure you must be concerned, because neglect of Christian training of little children may do irreparable harm."

17.4 "Parents, you know, are responsible for the spiritual growth as well as the physical or mental growth of their children."

17.5 "The finest, most dependable character is not possible without Christ, is it?"

18. Youth teams will win youth, perhaps more easily than adult teams. They talk the same language and have so many interests in common.

18.1 Expect youth to want to be Christian. They do not and should not feel satisfied to enjoy the Christian heritage and Christian influence without doing their share to pass it on to others.

18.2 Youth are loyal to principle. They enjoy doing what is right.

18.3 Young people give themselves with intense emotion to courses that challenge them.

18.4 They want to be of greatest service. Is there any greater than serving Christ?

18.5 Too, the church is the best fellowship center. Here we meet the best kind of friends, those with whom we like to live and work.

18.6 Talk simple language. Many young people are just waiting for someone to show them the way to find Christ and come into the church.

19. You will not have the answer to all special problems.

19.1 Admit you do not know, when that is the case.

19.2 Suggest that your pastor would be glad to call and help your friend.

19.3 The pastor will not only call before Membership Day on all who commit their lives to Christ,

but will meet them as a group or class and discuss with them what is involved in being a Christian and a loyal member of the church.

19.4 "The fact that we have problems may be the best reason why we should commit our lives to the Savior, and secure His help and guidance; don't you think?"

20. **Folk who claim to have had too much religion when they were young** would likely agree with you when you say,

20.1 "But you didn't turn out so bad, after all."

20.2 "Our parents did the best they knew how. They shared the kind of religion they experienced. Is it not true that we must share with our children the best we know?"

20.3 "You have been able to coast on the momentum you gained in childhood. Will your children have the same start?"

20.4 "And after all, the question is what are we doing with religion now, not how much we got when we were children; isn't that true?"

20.5 "Of the 28,000 names in Who's Who, 'Preachers' Kids' are the largest group. Now, they usually had plenty of religion given them in their childhood, but they turn out above average."

21. **Your personal witness and your knowledge of the Bible can be used** effectively by the Holy Spirit in meeting questions and objections.

21.1 We dare be personal in telling of our salvation and of our Savior. But tell of your experience and faith in everyday language that all can understand. Don't give a testimony that sounds as if you "learned it by heart" and just repeat it.

21.2 If it is your experience, tell your friend that you are glad for what Christ means to you; that He

saved you from your sin; and that He continues as Lord of your life. All you know about God you have learned from Christ Jesus your Lord. He really helps to make your life meaningful and joyous, and to give it purpose and power. The point is, tell *your own* experience in your own words.

21.3 Quote your Bible from memory as much as you are able, in answering questions and objections and in directing one seeking salvation. If you are familiar even with a few choice bits of Scripture, you will find use for them. Do you know any of the following verses by memory? Revelation 3: 20, 2 Corinthians 6: 2b, Hebrews 2: 3a, Romans 3: 10, 23, 14: 12, 1 Timothy 1: 15b, Luke 19: 10, 1 John 1: 7b, 9, John 3: 3, 16, 18, Luke 13: 3, Hebrews 7: 25.

21.4 You will be guided in your use of Scripture texts and the use of personal testimony, by two things: the amount of Scripture you have memorized and know and the nature of your Christian experience; but more than that which is at your command, you will be guided by the needs of the person you are interviewing. You will not use all you know—only what is most urgently needed in this call.

22. When you find "mixed" marriages,

22.1 We can be sure we are on firm ground when we believe it is better for mother and father to enjoy the same faith.

22.2 It may be better for neither one to insist on the other coming to his church, but both choose a common church and join it together. If we can aid in this direction we will.

22.3 If it is a matter of deep and sincere religious conviction that one or the other of the parents is a member of some church, urge that he be loyal to his faith, and that he permit his wife (or her husband) to be loyal to your church.

22.4 A former Roman Catholic should be asked,

22.41 "Were you married by the priest? And are you going regularly to mass?" "If you were not married by the priest, then you are not considered a Roman Catholic in good standing, are you?"

22.42 "But, you do believe in God and trust Christ as your Savior?"

22.43 "We have much in common, your church and ours (avoid using the word 'Protestant'). We have the same Savior, Jesus Christ, the same Lord's Prayer, the same Apostles' Creed, the same Bible." (Only the translations differ, and then only slightly.)

22.44 "We confess to God as do you. Our pastor will help us and pray for us, if we come to him. He is glad to give spiritual counsel whenever we ask."

22.45 "All authority is in Christ. Popes, priests and pastors try to interpret Him to men. His Gospel is the important thing. The interpretations can only be aids to an understanding of God's will. Is that not true?"

22.46 Beyond pointing out our similarities to a former Roman Catholic, it is well to keep in mind that there are some distinct differences. Without arguing, our testimony can be given to the sense of release and power that comes in conversion and surrender, and the joy that results from our participation in the work of the Church.

"People who have been former Roman Catholics and have come into our church testify to the added opportunities we have for taking part in church life, and developing as Christians. They tell of a rich spiritual fellowship they

claim not to have known before. They have glowing praise for their new-found joy in a very close friendship with the Savior. They speak of freedom from fear and authoritarianism, which releases them to live more completely for Christ. They talk of taking active part in the service of worship instead of being spectators, of greater opportunities for taking initiative in the work of the church, of freedom of access to God, and they are glad for the greater concern in our church for changing the world into a better place to live. They often compare our Country, in which Protestantism has been the major molding influence, with other countries where Roman Catholicism has dominated. Of course, we believe our church can make a large contribution to your life and home, and we know that through it you can make a large contribution to others and our world."

22.47 Ask the former Roman Catholic to commit himself to study under the pastor the full meaning of salvation and faith as we experience and share it in our Church.

22.5 Sometimes we face a similar problem in some former Lutherans. If the prospect has been led to believe that at confirmation, when he promised never to leave the church, that meant the Lutheran church, then we should help him see the larger loyalty to the Church of Christ, the Body of Christ, and to reaffirm loyalty to it.

22.6 If certain cults are involved, our own personal testimony is more effective than argument. We would do better not to debate about cults, unless we have rather exact and comprehensive knowledge of them.

23. Press for a verdict!

23.1 Make the decision to accept Christ and become part of the Church a challenging commitment of the man's whole life.

23.2 Do not minimize the demands of the Christian life.

23.3 "You know in your heart that you should live the Christian life; won't you take the step now, and become a Christian?"

23.4 "Life is like a ladder. Every step you take is either up or down. Won't you take the step up, tonight?"

23.5 Your own personal experience in the Christian life, what Christ means to you, or in your home, or to a friend, will aid tremendously at a point like this.

23.6 But do not press too hard and lose your man. We all object to "high pressure," and rightly.

23.7 Don't stay too long. One can go on and on until the prospect wants nothing more than to get rid of you.

23.8 If you cannot close the case favorably, leave it open. Someone else may be successful.

24. Use a decision or commitment card if you feel that will help your prospect visualize the step he should take.

24.1 When you are convinced that your friend is about to commit his life to the Savior, you may check the decision he is making and hand him the Commitment Card.

24.2 There is value in his holding the card while you discuss the importance of the decision he is making.

24.3 Do not hurry him in his decision.

24.4 Do not try to make up his mind for him. The choice must be his own.

24.5 But do not give up easily. It is for his own welfare that you are urging the commitment.

24.6 If he does not speak, you may say, "But that does express your conviction, doesn't it?"

24.7 If he says, "Yes, it does," he has made his commitment already.

24.8 The signing of the card is not the commitment. It only records the commitment already made.

24.9 When a commitment is made, something very important has happened. One who has become conscious of his own limitations and shortcomings and sins, and who is willing to turn to Christ for help and leading in a better way, and empowering for Christian living, can depend upon God doing His part, and saving such a one. We can only lead men to a willingness to turn to Christ; God saves them and makes them new creatures. Never should we or they doubt that God will keep His word when we have met the conditions of salvation.

25. Be sure to secure the correct information in church membership transfers.

25.1 The name of the church from which his membership is to be secured, and if possible the name of the present pastor should be written on the card.

25.2 If a lady's transfer is involved, secure her maiden name if she joined the church before she was married, or the former married name if she has been remarried.

25.3 If there is a question whether the person's name is still carried on the old church record, secure his consent for the pastor to write for it, and if it is no longer there, for the prospect to rededicate his life to Christ and join the church here.

25.4 Promise a pastoral call in which the minister will confer further on the matter and discuss any questions that arise.

26. Close the call with prayer. We can only call men to repentance and commitment to the Savior. He must *save* them. If they confess, He will forgive. We have a real part in leading persons to a willingness to accept the Savior. We are not unaware, however, of God's part in the transaction. He redeems, restores, makes whole, and puts the new joy in the heart, the joy of Christian salvation.

26.1 "Let us pray together. I will pray for you, and you pray for yourself. Our Bible says, 'If we confess our sins He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' When you have made your confession to Him, you can be sure He forgives you. Thank Him for His salvation and the peace which He gives when our guilt is removed. Then promise Him that, by His help, you will walk with Him daily in newness of life. Let us pray."

26.2 Or, "Brother ————, I'm so happy that you have made this greatest of all commitments. Before we leave, let us get down on our knees and thank God."

26.3 Make this prayer period a rich, meaningful one, helpful to your friend in whatever need he may have expressed, and exuberant in its faith in salvation.

26.4 In the prayer, thank God for what He's done, and what He will do, as we put our trust in Him.

26.5 Express appreciation for the commitment made, or the promise to do it soon, or for the faith that we have that men who know Christ will accept Him.

26.6 If there has been a commitment of life to the Savior, and you have helped the prospect to exercise faith in God's saving "all who come unto Him by Christ," he will have now the consciousness of forgiveness. How he responds to that will depend upon his individual nature. He may have much "feeling"

or little, but he will know the joy of salvation. Let him express it in any way he will, but rejoice with him in it.

27. If you cannot secure the commitment you seek, leave the door open for further contacts.

27.1 "You would not mind having our minister call upon you to discuss this matter, would you?"

27.2 "We are happy to have had this visit with you. Think it all over. We hope you will make your decision a favorable one, and soon. And in the meantime, visit our church, won't you?"

27.3 Leave him in a friendly spirit so that you or others from the church would be welcome back, and that the call may easily be followed up with another.

27.4 Some prospects need further cultivation; leave the way open for that.

27.5 Do your best—led by the Spirit. Don't get discouraged. Your efforts are not wasted. You never can tell what the Holy Spirit may yet do through those efforts.

28. Write on the back of the assignment card any facts and suggestions you have. A report on his work, interests, hobbies, special friends, or a statement of what he said in refusing a commitment now, would help the minister to choose the right fellowship friend for him, or the right callers for the next contact if he did not yet make his commitment to Christ and the Church.

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Matt. 4:19